# Assignment #1

**Title:**

***Conference Paper***

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The increase of social networking sites and how people interact through social media shows how communities spread awareness and information of current worldwide events. The majority of the population uses technology as a form of communication for personal or information purposes. Social media is considered to be built on the idea of how people know and interact with each other (Raut, & Patil, p.281, 2016). Social networking sites can cause significant changes within different communities and societies. This creates a difference in how people go about their daily life. Social media is continuing to grow rapidly, especially on social networking sites like Instagram and TikTok. Instagram and TikTok are popular social media platforms. Firstly, Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social networking service, but mainly it’s used for images, whereas TikTok is a video-focused social networking site. These two social networking platforms allow communities to spread awareness and information in two very different forms of communication. Using social networking sites to spread awareness and knowledge has become the more popular, faster and a more effective way to create positive social, political and economic change, this may be through methods such as activism. In addition, studies have revealed (Sandoval-Almazan, & Gil-Garcia, 2014) that movements go worldwide due to how quick and easy it is to post on multiple social networking sites, for example, Instagram and TikTok. People now constantly like to use these networks in their daily routines (Raut, & Patil, p.281, 2016). Furthermore, different social networking sites can impact communities by spreading awareness and information through the form of activism about certain current worldwide events. The use of social networking sites may create positive social change (Williams, 2015), political instability (Zhuravskaya, Petroza, & Enikolopov, 2020) and economic change (Jones, Borgman, & Ulusoy, 2015). Therefore, social networking sites have allowed communities to spread awareness and information about current worldwide events and create positive social, political and economic change due to online activism.

Social change can be complicated for a society to accept or handle. Still, social media can influence and spread awareness or information to allow social change to be more accepted. Social networking sites have created new movements within activism, which allows a more effective and faster way to make social change happen (Sandoval-Almazan, & Gil-Garcia, 2014). This is due to specific social networking platform movements spreading worldwide and creating social change. Social networking is considered an internet-based social media platform that allows individuals to stay connected with friends, family, or peers. Social networking sites include Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. Social change can be defined as how humans interact and how relationships transform cultural and social institutions over time, profoundly impacting society. Many forms of activism can lead to social change when using social networks to spread awareness further. For example, include activism in the form of hashtags, publishing news on websites, creating video and audio investigations, spreading information about protests, or organising campaigns. Media activism can be used for many different purposes. Williams stated that using activism in a form of hashtags on social networks have emerged as an effective way to share information and encourage change regarding a demographic that seems to get little support from its nation (Williams, 2015, p.342). Williams continues to mention throughout the article how black women's issues are more recognised when using social media hashtags, due to being able to attract traditional mainstream media. Nowadays, these issues are also spread quickly on social networks like TikTok or Instagram, which go worldwide. William's article provides evidence of how using hashtags as a form of activism can positively attract attention and spread awareness around an event or issue worldwide. Over the years, social media has become very popular and the way people now communicate, leading to the different online activism forms. Digital activism can create social movements and instigate social change. Hashtag activism was mainly widespread on either Twitter or Instagram as they are the platforms to use hashtags, although now TikTok use hashtags to filter what the user likes to watch and what is popular. This movement has become very effective and a fast way to change how society thinks about specific topics or issues occurring. Stache (2015) believes that hashtags can continue a "conversation beyond the originating dialogue" (p.162). Stache mentions that hashtags continue a conversation and reflect how social movements are suitable for educational purposes. Those who may not know a lot about a situation can then continue a discussion, ask questions and do research which then creates social change due to expanding their knowledge on a topic. Studies showed that Gil-Garcia et al. (2014) states that information shared and spread on social networks has the "potential to strengthen social movements" (p.365) and the overall society. The change created by social network sites promoting activism to implement social change has been seen as a positive effect. An example of a social network movement using hashtags that encouraged social change would be the #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo movements. The #BlackLivesMatter was the hashtag that went worldwide and created such significant social change around the globe. This movement already existed but became a worldwide movement after the tragic death of George Floyd. The #BLM movement led to many protests worldwide, which initially created such a difference within society. The hashtag movement allows people to connect and advocate for something they believe in as a form of activism. Social change due to digital activism has increased because of how popular social networking sites have become. Users can promote issues that need more attention by posting on social media to be able to be recognised and have the attention they should initially have. Therefore, social networking sites like Instagram and TikTok have allowed communities to spread awareness and information about current worldwide events and have created a positive social change due to digital activism.

Political views can vary depending on the individual. Politics has a significant impact worldwide, and digital activism on social networking sites can lead to change in politics. Politics is the set of activities associated with making decisions in groups or other forms of power relations among individuals. Social networking allows awareness and information to be spread to a broader audience, especially in 2022. The use of platforms like Instagram and TikTok can inform an audience about politics and make the unlikely audience see a photo or video about a political topic/view and create a conversation regarding their opinion about a particular topic. The use of social networking for politics has seemed to be more favorable due to the non-target audience getting involved and learning more about politics. Digital activism involving politics occurs worldwide, for example, Mike Brown and George Floyd's death and Blak Deaths in Custody. These issues have led to worldwide digital activism movements with one goal: to instigate political change. Regarding the article about Mike Brown's death in 2014, Smith, Heinrich, and Broersma discuss African Americans' systematic injustice. The use of social networking on a Facebook page meant it could be used as a form of digital activism that implemented an effective commemorative engagement about Brown's death. Therefore, social networking sites allow communities to spread awareness and information to positively impact political change. As mentioned previously, in similar situations, digital activism by using hashtags has instigated social change and political change. For example, this may be from African American deaths by police, Indigenous deaths in custody that continue to occur here in Australia, or sexual assault victims. Having social networks that use hashtags as a form of activism is a way to spread information about these issues and project the knowledge and awareness wider and connect more people. Those who use digital activism as their form of communication via social media, means the individual can participate no matter the time or location. As mentioned in the article written by Smit, Heinrich & Broersma, the critical findings within their research suggest that digital activism can create worldwide movements as social networks can spread information across major cities in countries and worldwide.

Zhuravskaya et al, the article discusses user-generated content and two-way communication within social media. This is a different way of how politicians and citizens can interact. Zhuravskaya states that social media provides feedback for politicians on "policy actions, discuss policy proposals and to measure political discontent" (p.417, 2020). Allowing feedback proved can lead to overall policy improvements. The article by Zhuravskaya, Petrozavodsk & Enikolopov states how the effects of the Internet and social networking sites impact "political participation, voting and political protests" (p.417, 2020). Many studies have shown the effects of the Internet on political participation and voting (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020). Due to the change and rapid growth of the Internet and social networking sites to connect voters via the Internet. This article also states how it is believed that social media has an influence and can facilitate street protests revolving around politics. Although Zhuravskaya studied about political effects of social media, it revealed that those unhappy with their governments are more likely to participate in a political protest because social media users can have access to upcoming events and "coordinate their tactics" (p.418, 2020). In addition, the political change that occurs because of social networking is a positive for the public or social networking users as it allows more access to information. Therefore, social networking sites like Instagram, Facebook and TikTok have allowed communities to spread awareness and knowledge about current worldwide events or issues and have created a positive political change because of digital activism.

Economics may not be the first thing an individual thinks of when speaking about social networking sites, however, economics has a big role in social networking, more than some may think. Economics is defined as a social science concerned with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Economics revolves around the studies of how individuals, businesses, governments and nations make choices about how to allocate resources. Studies from Jones, Borgman, & Ulusoy (2015) have revealed that many benefits come from the use of websites and social networking because it includes “an increase in awareness and inquiries, enhanced relationships with customers, an increase in the number of new customers, enhanced ability to reach customers on a global scale and co-promotion of local businesses” (p.611). In addition, this demonstrates the ability of social networking sites and how positive they can be for your business to have economic growth. Therefore, social networking sites have allowed communities to spread awareness and knowledge about current worldwide events or issues and have created a positive economic change.

In conclusion, we can state that social networking sites have allowed communities to spread awareness and information, mainly through online activism, which resulted in positive social and political change. The paper is an overview of how much social networking plays a role in spreading awareness about worldwide issues. It was discussed how different types of activism movements or social networking activities could positively change in both social and political settings. Social networking sites like Instagram and TikTok and digital activism movements have created a new form of communication to allow minority groups to be represented or spread awareness of issues or topics that do not get the attention of mainstream media. Therefore, social networking sites like Instagram and TikTok have allowed communities to spread awareness and information about current worldwide events and create positive social, political and economic change due to online activism.

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